

3 Reasons Why Women Should Lift—and Lift Heavy

“If I lift weights, I’ll end up looking like a linebacker.”

“Lifting weights makes women bulky. I’ve seen it.”

“I just want to tone, not put on muscle.”

As much as I try not to let them, statements like those aggravate my ears more than fingernails on a chalkboard, microphone feedback or Fran Drescher’s laugh. If you don’t want to change your body shape to look and feel better in your clothes, don’t care to raise your metabolism so you burn more calories even while browsing Pinterest, are apathetic about increasing your bone density to help ward off osteoporosis, and would rather ask a guy to move your furniture for you rather than do it yourself, then lifting weights isn’t for you and you won’t hurt my feelings by closing out of this article now.

I recently hosted a radio program (see below) titled “Top 3 Reasons Women Should Lift ... and Lift HEAVY!” and had as my guest one of my dearest friends, whom I met at the first gym I ever went to in high school. She was my first spin instructor as well as my weightlifting instructor followed by my sushi-consuming buddy for two years! Needless to say, she and I have had this conversation (OK, maybe more like rants!) about women who have an unfortunate fear they’ll “bulk up” the instant they touch a barbell.

If you don’t have time to listen to the 20-minute program, allow me to provide a few of the show’s highlights so you can hit the weights soon without thoughts of sprouting chest hair and growing an Adam’s apple clouding your mind.

Let me start by explaining why it’s biologically impossible

for you, as a woman, to morph into The Hulk (aside from the fact that The Hulk was exposed to the blast of a test gamma bomb he invented):

You simply don't have the testosterone levels to pack on tons of mass.

Men have higher testosterone levels than women; women have higher estrogen levels than men. Compare testosterone levels in a man to the amount in a woman and you'll find a large gap. Why? Simply put, women don't have testicles. The lion's share of male testosterone comes from the testes. Now, we *do* produce testosterone, but it comes from our ovaries and adrenal glands in *much* smaller doses.

Bottom Line: Testosterone is the primary muscle-building hormone in the body. Since women have significantly less of this "bulking hormone," they cannot put on muscle mass as easily as men.

What about those manly looking women? you may ask. For the competitive female bodybuilders to look the way they do, they must work out extremely hard and for long hours to build muscle mass. It takes them much longer to attain that look than it does men. They consume incredible amounts of added calories a day and, yes, use anabolic steroids.

OK. Now for the top three reasons why you should lift—and lift heavy:

1. Raise your metabolic rate. Your metabolism is the amount of energy your body needs to sustain itself. Because muscle requires calories (aka energy) to survive, increasing your muscle size and density will increase your metabolism.

Since we work against a high degree of resistance with heavy weights, we create tiny muscular tears throughout the body. We expend a greater number of calories post-workout to repair those tiny tears, thus increasing your overall calorie

requirements. Lifting weights will raise your metabolism long after you're finished. In fact, experts estimate that your metabolism stays elevated for up to 15 hours after you train. Again, this is because lifting strains your body so much that it needs extra time to recover.

2. Achieve greater muscle definition. The next benefit to lifting heavier weights is that you'll see greater overall muscle definition. When you lift a light weight lots of times, as most women do—no joke, I once spotted a woman doing a 3-pound tricep kickback with one hand while chatting on her cell phone with the other for a solid two minutes—the muscles are barely challenged. As a result, your muscles won't feel any need to adapt (grow) since they can easily handle what you throw at them.

Make sure you're always pushing yourself and taking the weight up to the next level. That's when you'll see muscle definition and your form improve. If you commit to following a proper diet, heavy weights will make you look and feel beautiful and confident in your own skin—as well as in your favorite pair of skinny jeans or workout tank top.

3. Improve your functional strength for daily life. The final benefit you achieve by lifting heavier weights is that you improve functional strength capabilities. Since you get *much* stronger by lifting heavier weights, everyday activities will get much easier over time. You won't need to call your boyfriend to move a couch or ask your husband to hoist the bag of dog food out of the trunk. Muscularity also means a lower chance of injury if you participate in sports or other activities.

There you have it! I hope this has inspired you to break up with your preferred cardio machine for a while and make friends with some iron! Stay fit, stay faithful.

For the original article, visit .

Diana Anderson-Tyler is the author of Creation House's Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman's Guide to Total Fitness. Her popular website can be found at [www.creationhouse.com](#), and she is the owner and a coach at CrossFit 925. Diana can be reached on Twitter.